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# Digital Revolution in Filmmaking in India and the Democratic Challenge

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## **Biography**

Fabienne Le Houérou, born on November 7, 1959, in Montpellier, is a French historian and Anthropologist, filmmaker, and researcher. She completed her studies at Sciences Po Paris and specialized in ethnohistory. Le Houérou joined the CNRS in 1995 and became a director of research in 2015. Her work focuses on colonial history, postcolonial migrations, and humanitarian crises. She has published 13 books, including "Filmer les réfugiés" and "Behind the Bridge." Le Houérou is also involved in filmmaking, with works like "Self-Fiction, Self-Migration" and "Princes et Vagabonds". She has directed 11 documentaries. (*generated by AI Perplexity*)

## **Abstract:**

TFO (Talking Films online) are weekly discussions on films that also lead to international seminars, festivals and visual contests. A multidirectional activity is a nourishment for a new approach to cinema. These multidirectional layers are, in my view, very inspiring and rhizomatic: offering a horizontal lecture of filmmaking more interesting than a vertical top-down analysis. In such TFO meets the concept created by the French philosopher Deleuze (1980) of a Rhizome organizational pattern. A rhizome is a plant with multiple roots growing in different ways (like orchids, potatoes, lotus) in apparent chaotic order. (Le Houérou, 2019, 2022, 2023, 2024) My keynote today is not limited to formal politeness but is directly inspired by the films I have screened for the TFO festival during June 2024. A Smartphone film contest involving student's short films. Today, digital technology touches every aspect of Indian society and furthermore Indian filmmaking. Digital cameras, as small as lipstick items, associated with AI boundless possibilities constitute a democratic revolution. The mass arrival of Smartphones on the market since 2010 is without exaggeration comparable to a revolution. We all know that when affordable smartphones and cellular data became ubiquitous in the 2010s in India, internet access largely expanded. This event was a big bang for all communications and visual arts and of course in all sectors of economy and society. It was a rhizomatic change signaling discontinuities in all directions of human activity. From 2023, music, color grading, voices, animated visuals, pictures, any sound, can be created for free with the merging, reducing dramatically the cost of filmmaking. It is possible, more than ever before, to create a film with

a very low budget. This opportunity did not exist in the previous years. The last TFO festival (June 2024) is demonstrating how clear young women are voicing their aspirations. The winners of the festival demonstrated incredible desire for change within the society. I will insist on the short film directed by the winner of the silver award, Haffeeefa Jebi. The gender approach of the subject illustrates, more than any other film, the desire for freedom, and self-respect of a new generation.

I will speak about discontinuities in the commercial cinema, in student's films with new subjects of films and new ways to treat societal challenges and finally I will analyze the technical revolution that could made this discontinuity happen since 2010, this date could be seen as a turning point in the history of Indian cinema

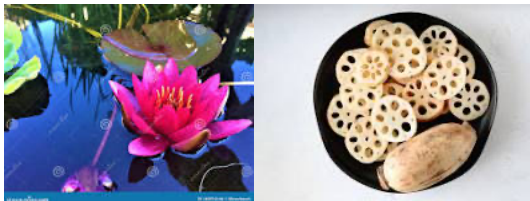


1-AI image created with IDEOGRAM by FLH September 2024

## Introduction

I would like at first to thank my colleagues of TFO, professors Nikhila, Gita, Tharakeswar for the seminar and their original approach of research in cinema studies. TFO (Talking Films on Line) is not only an informal group as it claims it with modesty but a weekly seminar, a festival with a jury putting together an imaginative and dynamic association of scholars questioning the cinematic world constantly on a universal base. The absence of stiff frontiers and the global approach of TFO was very challenging intellectually. I appreciated it for its inner

interconnectedness and thus modernity if we understand this whole connectivity as a modern style of our times. Weekly discussions on films lead to international seminars that also conduct to festival and contests. A multidirectional activity is a nourishment for a new approach on cinema. This multidirectional approach is, in my view, very inspiring and rhizomatic: offering a horizontal lecture of filmmaking more interesting than a vertical top-down analysis. In such TFO meets the concept created by the philosopher Deleuze (1980) of a Rhizome organizational pattern (Deleuze, 1980). A rhizome is a plant with multidirectional roots (like orchids, potatoes, lotus) going in different orientations with apparent chaotic disorder in different ways. (Le Houérou, 2018, 2024).



2-Lotus as a rhizomatic plant, source internet 2024.

My keynote today is not limited to a formal politeness but is directly inspired by the films I have seen in TFO Smartphone Film Festival during June 2024 a involving student's short films.

Today, digital technology touches every aspect of Indian society and furthermore Indian filmmaking. Digital cameras, as small as lipsticks items, associated with AI (Artificial Intelligence) boundless creativity and possibilities constitute a lead in a democratic revolution. The mass arrival of Smartphones on the Indian market since 2010 constitutes a real revolution in India and all over the world.

It is well acknowledged and globally admitted that when affordable Smartphones and cellular data became ubiquitous in the 2010s in India, internet access exploded. It was a revolution in communications involving all human activities.

Since Artificial Intelligence (AI) explosion in 2023, on the digital market, music, color grading, voices, animated visuals, pictures and any sound can be created for free with the merging AI diminishing dramatically the cost of filmmaking.



3-AI- Invideo creation with FLH.2024

It is possible, more than ever before, to create a film with a very low budget. This possibility did not exist in the previous years. It will erase many jobs in the cinema industry offering a lot of autonomy to young artists without budget. Digital audio editing and post-production are offering to Indian women filmmakers' incredible opportunities that they are already experiencing. The last TFO festival (June 2024) is demonstrating how clear young women are voicing their aspirations. The winners of the festival demonstrated incredible desire of change in the society. I will mention the 5 winners, but we must admit that the films proposed were globally very imaginative and offering signs of discontinuities in the history of Indian cinema. These students' short films could be considered a landmark in the Indian visual revolution in filmmaking in India.

Talking Films online (TFO) selected 5 excellent films among 33 candidates.

1. TFO Gold Award – Dasari Prudhvi's film SANCHARI (male director)
2. TFO Silver Award – Hafeefa Jebi's film BAALA (female director)
3. TFO Bronze Award – Yashoram R.'s film APPA (male director)
4. The Wise Owl Critics' Prize – Shubh Tripathi's film VOLTOV (male director)
5. Special Mention and Jury commendation – Kapdi Bhargav's film ECHOES OF FREEDOM (male director)

I will insist on the silver award with the film Baala directed by a young lady named Hafeefa Jebi. She was the only female director among the 5 winners with a very innovative and inspirational movie. Her gender belonging is also a strong marker of the author's identity.



4-Baala (2024)-2:44 (Time code)-Directed by Hafeefa Jebi

The message of the film is innovative. Young ladies' expression's through digital cinema are aspiring to change gender perceptions in the Indian society. The reduction of costs in filmmaking with new technologies are obviously giving them more opportunities to express their own views.

Production and distribution are now accessible for all. Outsiders' artists are challenging an industry traditionally dominated by few families in India (and elsewhere). As we can observe in students' festivals: smartphones miniature cameras are a major push for merging creativity, imagination and new forms of expressions. The festival organized by TFO in June 2024, has shown how Indian youth from the academic *milieu*, students in Indian Universities have grasped this technology to express themselves. This expression is also a political push for voicing their diversity and new aspirations like gender equality and other social subjects. Among these anthropological themes I will rather focus on discontinuities. I will not speak about **continuities like distribution of music and rhythm impacted by cultural musical ambiance, aesthetic of landscapes filmed in long shots and slow motion.**

The problematic proposed by Doctor Gita and Nikhila is challenging these two notions of continuities and discontinuities. The two concepts are pertinent tool of analysis. Changes are never radical and unseen traditional features are remaining behind new faces, new technologies and a world of new appearances. Behind scenes we can distinguish old patterns such as financial old school patterns and other traits - showing how few families are still the owners of the industry with new strategies of recovery for not losing their privileges.

## **Discontinuities**

A-Digital revolution underscore societal questions raised by the young generation

B- Digital facilities is opening the way to questioning and filming abuses in Indian society. Digital facilities break the process of traditional muting narratives, silencing subjects related to

Indian modesty on delicate questions such as gender equality masculinities, feminities and nudity.

The rich material of the 33 films that I have analyzed is nourishing my problematical approach. I was very amazed by the quality of the films shot with a smartphone but more importantly by the emergence of a new imagination born as a resistance, rebellion or just a critical view of the students on Indian society at large or just related to their immediate environment at short. The characteristic of a critical mind was offering its very refreshing vitality.

These films were not copying Indian commercial successes on the box office but were bringing questions to the society at large. These critical views can be valued as a major discontinuity in the history of the Indian Cinema.

That being, it is crystal clear, in my view, that the young generation is very critical on societal questions meeting the commercial cinema that can be broadcasted in platforms. One of the main question distinguishable by the new Indian cinema in worldwide platforms such as Netflix or Prime video is related to sex, marriage, dowry, family abuses, society abuses including rapes, masculinity, feminities questioned as social fabric of identities.

I must admit that I have seen more than 200 hundred films on these platforms writing summary sheets on the subjects that were mainly treated. It was surprising to observe that the young generation of students engaged in TFO contest were treating the same subjects related to injustice and freedom. Rejecting rapes, abuses of all sorts comprising bullying, physical and mental violence. The young generation is marking a neat discontinuity meeting the main interests of Indian directors today showing thirst on gender equality. This quest for fairness and non-discrimination has a political layer and a democratic dimension that meets the subjects treated by the new generation of directors. Behind family stories, behind thrillers, horrors movies, emerge the right to choose a husband or a wife, the right to be free, the right of speaking about his sex life, the right to speak about economic inequalities and the weight of them on individuals' destinies. Small cameras are facilitating to approach these new subjects and to express a critical view on the society engaging cinematography in a clear rupture that brings anyone who has a story to tell to express it with a minimal cost. This rupture is possible because in my view India is lively democracy capable of expressing new discourses on the society's evolution with more accurate attention than many Asian neighbors.

### **A) Discontinuities in the commercial cinema**

#### **Rejecting abuses at large. All sorts of abuses: society and family abuses.**

The years 2012- are a turning point in the merging of anticorruption and anti-abuse films with a new generation of actors and directors promoting the figure of the "normal man" and not the superheroes with Ray-Ban glasses. The vogue for the unlimited super Indian hero was coming to an end. At the contrary the cinema world promoted the character of a "normal man" with its

natural limits. An incredible talented actor like Nawazzudin Sidiqi was a cinematic incarnation of a normal man not too handsome, not too strong, not too white, not too perfect but a man issued from the Indian middle class real world. His talent is to be the symbol of such a revolution in Bollywood masculine representations.

When affordable smartphones for the middle class and cellular data became ubiquitous in the 2010s in India, internet access became a big bang. A big bang in communications and freedom of speech. If I repeat this sentence, it is because internet explosion was a major event with multiples societal and economic consequences.



5-AI image created by FLH with Invideo, 2024.

It affected the ways men and women were identifying to their gender identity, and it impacted a worldwide consciousness on sex identities. Internet was offering a global view of alternative representations of gender identities. It started to change the ways the public was perceiving gays communities and the ways films were representing homosexuality. Same sex love was a taboo for decades in Indian cinema. Together with globalization the cinema started to give alternative gender stereotypes views showing homosexual characters in the films pushed by the platform of Netflix and prime Video who perfectly master the soft power of cinema.

In the list of discontinuities smartphone and internet explosion in India brought to light a list of few themes that were traditionally never treated by Bollywood.

**1-Rapes**

**2-Abuses**



### 3-Forced marriage and family violence and conflicts

### 4-Corruption

#### Rapes

**Delhi crime (2019)** broadcasted on Netflix tells the story of Nirbhaya case a rape that shook all India by its cruelty. *Delhi Crime* is based on the 2012 DELHI GANG rape case that took place in the neighborhood in Murnika in South Delhi. The series follows the story in the aftermath of the gang rape, where Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Vartika Chaturvedi is tasked to find the culprits responsible for the assaults and subsequent death of the female victim.

**Mom (2017)**. Mom is Indian Hindi-language crime-thriller film directed by Ravi Udyawar. The film stars Sridevi as a vigilante who sets out to avenge her stepdaughter after she is sexually assaulted at a party. *Mom* was released on 7 July 2017 in four languages. It was a global blockbuster grossing US\$ 21 millions worldwide. The film received positive reviews from critics, with Sridevi receiving widespread acclaim for her "powerhouse" performance. It was her 300th (and final) major film appearance before her death on 24 February 2018.

*Mom* received two awards.

#### Corruption subjects

**Sacred Games (2018)**. An Indian neo-noir crime thriller television series based on Vikram Chadras' 2006 novel. Produced and directed by Vikram Aditya .It is India's first Netflix original series.

The series follows Sartaj Singh (Saif Ali Khan), a troubled police officer in Mumbai who receives a phone call from gangster Ganesh Gaitonde (Nawazudin Siddiqui) warning him to save the city within 25 days. As the series unfolds, it chronicles the intense events that follow this ominous call.

#### Mirzapur (2018)

Mirzapur is a tale of trigger-happy gangsters with sharp minds and dry humor, where loyalties change in a flash and cold cash rules. Violence is an everyday occurrence where complete and utter dominance is the goal. Politicians, cops, lawyers, and mafia lords are involved in a complex web of relationships and rivalries. Complexity of corruption and its human connectivity is at the heart of the series and might explain its success worldwide.

An Insignificant Man (2016). Is a Hindi/English Indian socio-political documentary co-produced and directed by Khushboo Ranka and Vinay Shukla and co-produced by filmmaker Anand Gandhi. The subject is related to the rise of anti-corruption movement in India. 2011 Indian anti-corruption movement protests in India and the formation and rise to power of the AAM Aadmi Party (AAP). The film received a standing ovation at its premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival and has gone on to have sold out screenings at major festival across the world.

The documentary chronicles the rise of the AAP, which was an independent political faction that gained traction through campaigns against the corruption in Indian politics and was headed by Arvind Kejriwal. It captures the day-to-day functioning of the AAP between December 2012 and December 2013, concluding with the Delhi elections. The film released in India on 17 November 2017. The film was earlier known as "Proposition for a Revolution".

There could be a correlation between the subjects dealt by the commercial cinema and the one's dealt by amateur's students' films as presented at TFO. They are not opposed at the contrary. It's fair to ask the following question: would the young generation have dared to approach traditional taboo subjects in India, such as abuses, same sex love, corruption, in their films without the commercial film's pre-revolution in the Indian cinema opening the door for critical views on the society?

## **B) Discontinuities as shown in students' films in 2024**

In my interpretation, the commercial successes of these series and movies were a major push for engaging the directors and producers to experiment new subjects and particularly social themes. Most of the time same sex love is not treated as the only subject but would be suggested in a thriller representing gays in love or transgender problematic with no judgment or societal morality. I found the same absence of moral judgment and thirst of comprehension and tolerance in one of the films proposed by the students specially in the short film Baala directed by Hafeefa Jebi's a female director. I particularly appreciated the decency and intelligent approach of transgender problematic. I rated highly the subtle approach of social conflicts in all

the films but particularly Baala the film directed by this young lady.



6-Baala (2024).

**Baala (2024)** is a very exciting film with extremely interesting aesthetic staging a transexual woman and a young man, showing full respect and a form of understanding and tenderness for the subject.



7-Baala (2024).TC 7:53

Most of the short films directed by the students were dealing with:

## **-Family conflicts, everyday problem, harassment, bullying**

**The film “Appa (2024)”** describes a father and son conflict. The father is ashamed of his son and the son sees his father as a sadist.

It’s a very short and well mastered narration showing family violence a subject that was not traditionally represented in the Indian Cinema.

-The film **Kaifot (2024)** shows a girl student who cannot afford to pay her rent and expose a patriarchal society when women are pushed and harass by other women. Gender equality is the clear subject of the short movie.

-**Naari Nehi (2024)** was treating of self-love. Girl self-love and gender abuses in a very efficient way.

-**The break (2024)** is a very interesting film on sorority and girl socialization based on girls’ studies and collective solidarity.

-**The fairy (2024)** broaches the subject of rape in a very direct way. Showing frontally family violence without mask. The narrative logic is very well mastered and efficient and the film narrates abuses inside the family. The uncle is the one who rapes the little girl raising the subject of inner violence inside the family. Generally raped tales or stories stage an outsider rapist. Here the rapist is inside the household.

-**Hypocrite (2024)** is also a rebellious film interrogating social hypocrisy.

-**Manzar (2024)** treats the bullying mechanism and the intimacy of a girl specially when she is in the shower insisting on the scene showing the problematic of nudity for girls.

**Echoes of freedom (2024)** speaks about rage and frustration and the metaphor of angry dogs works perfectly to serve the narration.

**Ragged (2024)** narrates the challenges faced by young people concerning addictions: harassment, smoking, alcohol, drugs (coke) and tries to demonstrate than any good guy can become a bad one.

They all speak about the uneasiness to be a student concerning their economical precarity, social harassment, search of equality and happiness in an environment that very often does not understand them. They have in common to be critical of their student reality and express aspiration for fairness and gender equality.

With these expressions they are thirsty of social dialoguing, social analysis of a middle class willing to direct its destiny and freedom of speech to express their choices. In short expressing individual will in front of a family imposing their choices. **Echoes of freedom (2024)** is a perfect illustration of this thirst for free choice and won a special mention in TFO festival.

Behind the individual quest for freedom there is also a democratic collective aspiration concerning the “choice”. Liberty and unbound commitment in the way they want to handle their life.

The desire of independence, financial autonomy, sovereignty of choice, self-love, self-rule, self-determination, civil liberties, civil rights, human rights free will, determination.

Considering the self, the individual is a key message expressing the young generation's aspirations. Their creativity is in tune with the key desire to count as a "me", "myself" as unique subject.

**The desire for self-esteem is overdetermined, overexpressed in all these students' films.**



8-Baala (2024).

The construct of self-esteem has been shown to be a desirable one in psychology, as it is associated with a variety of positive outcomes, such as academic achievement, relationship satisfaction, happiness, and lower rates of criminal behavior. The benefits of high self-esteem are thought to include improved mental and physical health, and less anti-social behavior while drawbacks of low self-esteem have been found to be anxiety, loneliness, and increased vulnerability to substance abuse.

Self-esteem can apply to a specific attribute or globally. Psychologists usually regard self-esteem as an enduring personality characteristic (*trait self-esteem*), though normal, short-term variations (*state self-esteem*) also exist. **Synonyms or near-synonyms of self-esteem include self-worth, self-regard, self-respect, self-integrity and self-love** as shown in the student film Naari Nehi Apsara Hei Who directed by Iman Bhattacharya or like the film Baala, that I have already mentioned, directed by Hafeefa Jebi. expressing that what matters is not the eyes of the society on you because you are not what people say but you are what you love as the film Baala stresses.

### **C) Technical discontinuities made possible by technological revolution**

As a jury I was frustrated to choose a winner because almost 10 films were excellent not only because courageously exploring new subjects or taboo subjects like a transgender portrait in Baala but also because technically so well mastered with small cameras' smartphones. They

took the best of smartphones capacities including movement and stabilization of movement none of the 33 films presented at TFO festival offered an instable image. Filmmaking has to do with two fundamentals demands: stability of fixed plans, stability when moving, for example during a travelling and distribution of light. Beauty is the fruit of movement and light.

Creators don't rely on their smartphones alone to capture compelling video. That is the case of almost films presented in June 2024 by the students.

### **Movement matters**

When you watch dynamic video footage, it's generally immediately obvious whether it was shot on a phone. Judders, shakes, jerky movements and odd framing — **there are countless tells for a video recorded on a phone. Smooth camera movements are essential to elevating the quality of non-professional and amateur videos** and achieving a cinematic effect. Smartphone stabilizers, also called gimbals, **tackle the stabilization issue head-on**, correcting unwanted movements with a series of motors. And thanks to recent advances in AI, state-of-the-art gimbals like go beyond just improving your footage's stabilization. The best stabilizers now offer the ability to effortlessly **achieve cinematic tracking shots** that keep subjects locked in center-frame, along with perfectly timed pans, zooms and tilts. Some even help with the edit. These strengths are why the best smartphone creators rarely leave home without their favorite gimbal stashed in their gear bag.

### **Gimbals**

Gimbals massively expand the range of motion you can take advantage of with your shots — wrists are useful, but they have limits. One of the most impressive shots you can get is a **flawless follow shot**. You have the ability with a gimbal to keep any subject you like locked exactly where you want them in frame. You just **select your subject with a tap, and your gimbal will do the rest** of the work in capturing a pro-level follow cam effect.

Flow also uses Person Re-Identification so no matter how or where your subject moves — even momentarily out of frame — it will instantly recalibrate to follow them. Combine this ability with slow motion or dynamic zooms and **the effect is breathtaking**. I did experience it in my film in 2016 “Princes and vagabonds” the audience in Paris did not believe me when I confessed that the film was shot with a multitargeting gimbal that also could turn to film me while filming in selfie mode.

When the two commands concerning movement and light are not sufficiently professional the film becomes a burden for the viewer in the sense that it is tiring to follow the shooting for a spectator because cinematic norms are not followed. Only one film in TFO festival showed uncontrolled movements and the absence of gimbal.

In the film Baala for example all technical demands are controlled. The movement of camera are so smooth that you would never guess that the film was fabricated with a smartphone. The railway station where the action takes place is a beautiful metaphor of the situation of the

transgender girl begging her *chapate* in the railway station. There is a conversation between a male student and the transgender beggar and prostitute, exchanging gifts. At the beginning Baala finds the student's purse and give it back to him and secondly the boy offers her a book called "Hidden soul" which is an invitation to go beyond social morals. Baala is not judged but seen, appreciated and understood as a soul in the film.



9- Baala (2024). The gift

There is a conversation on the bench of the railway station and very originally the camera does not use a shot reverse shot: a classical technique to register visually a conversation. Both actors speak in front of the camera on the same level. This choice is very important I don't know if it was conscious or not but the way of filming the communication between the two translates immensity of modesty as both characters do not look at each other but confess very intimate



thoughts. Like Baala saying, *"I will never be myself"*.  
10- Baala (2024).

*Here again comes the challenging idea of "being yourself" in the social world.*

**Conclusion: Cinema, Free Speech and Democracy**





11-Baala (2024)

**“My voice does count”** is the synthetic message of all these students’ short films. If you translate the message politically it becomes a real desire for democracy and a democratic challenge. Following the messages of the young filmmakers I would conclude that **free speech** is at the heart of this aspirations. In a society where Free speech is upheld, people can openly engage in debates about various issues, from political matters to social concerns. Robust and diverse discussions allow for the exploration of different perspectives, leading to a more nuanced understanding of complex topics.

*Is it necessary to underscore that Free speech and expression is the lifeblood of democracy?*

*It’s facilitating open debate, the proper consideration of diverse interests and perspectives, and the negotiation and compromise necessary for consensual policy decisions. Efforts to suppress nonviolent expression, far from ensuring peace and stability, can allow unseen problems to fester and erupt in far more dangerous forms. (Meiklejohn)*

Freedom of speech is understood to be fundamental in a democracy. The norms on limiting freedom of expression mean that public debate may not be completely suppressed even in times of emergency. Meiklejohn, Alexander is one of the most notable proponents of the link between freedom of speech and democracy. He has argued that the concept of democracy is that of self-government by the people. For such a system to work, an informed electorate is necessary. There must be no constraints on the free flow of information and ideas. According to Meiklejohn, democracy will not be true to its essential ideal if those in power can manipulate the electorate by withholding information and stifling criticism. Meiklejohn acknowledges that the desire to manipulate opinion can stem from the motive of seeking to benefit society. However, he argues, choosing manipulation negates, in its means, the democratic ideal.

Thomas Emerson argued that freedom of speech helps to provide a balance between stability and change. Freedom of speech acts as a "safety valve" to let off steam when people might otherwise be bent on revolution. He argues that "The principle of open discussion is a method of achieving a more adaptable and at the same time more stable community, of maintaining the precarious balance between healthy cleavage and necessary consensus". Emerson furthermore maintains that "Opposition serves a vital social function in offsetting or ameliorating (the) normal process of bureaucratic decay".

Research undertaken by the Worldwide Governance Indicators project at the World Bank, indicates that freedom of speech, and the process of accountability that follows it, have a significant impact on the quality of governance of a country. "Voice and Accountability" within a country, defined as the extent to which a country's citizens can participate in selecting their government as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association and free media is one of the six dimensions of governance that the Worldwide Governance Indicators measure for more than 200 countries. Against this backdrop it is important that development agencies create grounds for effective support for a free press in developing countries.

Richard Moon<sup>1</sup> has developed the argument that the value of freedom of speech and freedom of expression lies with social interactions. Moon writes that "by communicating an individual forms relationships and associations with others -family, friends, co-workers, church congregation, and countrymen. By entering discussion with others an individual participates in the development of knowledge and in the direction of the community".



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<sup>1</sup> In *The Life and Death of Freedom of Expression*, Richard Moon argues that freedom of expression is valuable because human agency and identity emerge in discourse – in the joint activity of creating meaning. Moon recognizes that the social character of individual agency and identity is crucial to understanding not only the value of expression but also its potential for harm.

The book considers a range of issues, including the regulation of advertising, hate speech, pornography, blasphemy, and public protest. The book also considers the shift to social media as the principal platform for public engagement, which has added to the ways in which speech can be harmful while undermining the effectiveness of traditional legal responses to harmful speech. *The Life and Death of Freedom of Expression* makes the case that the principal threat to public discourse may no longer be censorship, but it is rather the spread of disinformation, which undermines public trust in traditional sources of information and makes engagement between different positions and groups increasingly difficult.

12-Baala (2024)

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